Met Office Hadley Centre marks 25th anniversary

22 May 2015 - The Met Office's world renowned climate research centre is celebrating 25 years at the forefront of global climate science this month.

From developing some of the world's most sophisticated climate models, to contributing to breakthroughs in global understanding of the climate system, the Met Office Hadley Centre has been pivotal in maintaining the UK's reputation as a leader in climate research.

The centre was opened by then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, on May 25 1990 to study, observe and predict our changing climate.

Since then its scientists have worked with thousands of peers from science institutions around the world to pioneer research that has shaped global understanding of the past, present and future climate.

Margaret Thatcher opening the Met Office Hadley Centre in 1990

Recognising this influence, in 2009 the centre was named as the world's number one geosciences research centre in a report by Thomson Reuters for Times Higher Education.

Professor Dame Julia Slingo, Chief Scientist at the Met Office, said: "I'm immensely proud of the achievements of the Met Office Hadley Centre over the past 25 years. It has been right at the forefront of climate science and is respected around the world.

"It has produced research which has helped push the boundaries of what we understand about our changing climate and delivered tangible benefits for protecting lives and livelihoods the world over."

Below are a few key achievements of the Met Office Hadley Centre during its 25 year history:

- Development of key global observation datasets such as HadISST (sea-surface temperature and sea ice data) and HadCRUT (global temperature dataset) that have enabled the detection of changes in our climate;
- Key advances in the detection and attribution of the influence of climate change on extreme weather;
- Pioneering of techniques for seasonal forecasting across different parts of the world, helping to provide skilful longer-range outlooks;
- First skilful decadal climate predictions using a climate model;
- Projections of future climate change for government policy advice;
- Development of state of the art climate and earth system models.

Professor Stephen Belcher, current head of the Met Office Hadley Centre, said the 25th anniversary was a great time to reflect on achievements and look forward to future discoveries.

"It's amazing to think how much climate science has changed over the past 25 years - not just in the way we work and the technology we use, but also the huge advances in global understanding of the Earth's climate," he said.

"During that time it has helped answer fundamental questions - we can now say unequivocally that the world is warming and it is extremely likely that the dominant cause is human influence. Now we are looking ahead to provide more detailed information on what this means for individuals and how we can manage these changes."

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